UNITED NATIONS **A S**

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/49/580
S/1994/1217
27 October 1994
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Forty-ninth session
Item 42 of the provisional agenda
THE SITUATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA:
PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FIRM AND LASTING PEACE AND PROGRESS IN FASHIONING A REGION OF PEACE, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-ninth year

Letter dated 24 October 1994 from the representatives of Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit to you herewith the documents entitled "Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America" (see annex I) and "Commitments on the Environment and Natural Resources" (see annex II), adopted at the Central American environment summit meeting for sustainable development, held in Managua, Nicaragua, on 12 and 13 October 1994.

We should be grateful if you would have this note and its annexes circulated as documents of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session under agenda item 42 and of the Security Council.

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Annex I

Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America

I. INTRODUCTION

1. We the Presidents of the Republics of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama and the representative of the Prime Minister of Belize, meeting at the Central American Environment Summit for Sustainable Development, held in Managua, have agreed that prevailing circumstances in the region call for a new course of action, and we have accordingly decided to adopt an integrated strategy for sustainable development in the region.

2. As we stated in the Declaration of Guácimo, we have embodied this approach in a national and regional strategy that we have called the "Alliance for Sustainable Development", a comprehensive Central American initiative in the political, moral, economic, social and ecological fields which we have translated into a programme of action, hoping thereby to set an example for other regions.

3. The Alliance for Sustainable Development is an initiative involving short, medium and long-term policies, programmes and activities which marks a shift in our pattern of development, in our individual and collective attitudes and in local, national and regional policies and projects in so far as they affect the political, economic, social, cultural and environmental sustainability of societies.

4. The Alliance is a regional strategy for the coordination and sharing of interests, development initiatives and responsibilities and for the harmonization of rights. Its implementation is based on institutional structures; it does not replace existing regional integration mechanisms or instruments, but complements, supports and strengthens them both within and outside the region, especially in making sustainable development the central strategy and policies of States and of the region as a whole. With the Alliance, the commitments already entered into by states for the new process of sustainable development in Central America are confirmed and broadened.

5. In this quest for, and commitment to a pattern of sustainable development specific to the Central American community, we are taking responsibility for a better utilization and more efficient management of our region's resources.

6. In this context, we believe that the international community can and should contribute to sustainable development in Central America by changing its own attitudes, policies and course of action in respect of the region; this will place relations between the international community and the countries of the isthmus on an entirely new and mutually beneficial footing.

7. The Central American Council for Sustainable Development, the Alliance's executive authority, will promote and negotiate the conclusion of agreements designed to support sustainable development in Central America with countries, groups of countries and regions and with regional and international cooperation

organizations with the consent and support of the institutions directly responsible at both the national and regional levels.

8. Central America will give concrete form to rights and responsibilities established in Agenda 21, adopted in Rio de Janeiro, in an endeavour to become a model of sustainable development for all countries; our guiding principles for the future will be respect for life in all its forms; continuous improvement of the quality of life; respect for the vitality and diversity of our earth; peace; participatory democracy; the observance, promotion and protection of human rights; respect for the multicultural character and ethnic diversity of our peoples; economic integration within the region and with the world outside; and the responsibility of succeeding generations for sustainable development.

II. CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

9. Given the specific features and characteristics of the Central American region, the concept of sustainable development to which we subscribe is as follows:

> Sustainable development is a process of progressive change in the quality of life of the population, in which development will revolve around the human person, who will be its prime beneficiary; it will be accomplished through economic growth with social equity and the transformation of production methods and consumer patterns, and will be based on preserving the ecological balance and the region's life-giving resources. This process implies respect for regional, national and local ethnic and cultural diversity, and strengthened, full participation by citizens living together peacefully and in harmony with nature, without jeopardizing the quality of life of future generations; on the contrary, guaranteeing its wholesomeness.

III. PRINCIPLES OF THE ALLIANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

10. The seven basic principles to which we Central Americans are subscribing with a view to achieving sustainable development are set out below. These principles will prevail in all policies, programmes and activities promoted separately or jointly by States and by civil society to fulfil their basic common goals and commitments.

A. Respect for life in all its forms

11. The foundation of life is an ethic and a scale of moral values based on respect, personal responsibility and consideration for other living beings and the earth. Sustainable development will not be achieved at the expense of other groups or of future generations, nor will it threaten the survival of other species.

B. Improvement of the quality of human life

12. The aim of sustainable development is to improve and guarantee the quality of human life. This will make it possible for individuals to develop their potential and to live lives of dignity and accomplishment. To achieve this, it is imperative to provide security through human development, fostering participatory democracy, respect for cultural pluralism and ethnic diversity, access to education and promotion of technical and vocational training that will further economic growth with equity.

C. Sustainable utilization and respect for the earth's vitality and diversity

13. Local, national and regional development will be based on the sustainable utilization and management of the earth's resources and on protection of the structure, functions and diversity of natural systems, on which the human species and other species depend. To that end, appropriate action will be taken to:

(a) Preserve the systems that sustain life and the ecological processes that determine climate and air and water quality, regulate the flow of waters, recycle essential elements, create and generate soil and enable ecosystems to renew themselves;

(b) Protect and conserve the biodiversity of all species of plants, animals and other organisms, of genetic stocks within each species and of the range of ecosystems;

(c) Ensure the sustainable utilization of natural resources, especially the soil, wild and domesticated species, woodlands, cultivated land and marine and freshwater ecosystems.

D. Promotion of peace and democracy as basic forms of human coexistence

14. Political freedom, the observance, protection and promotion of human rights, the fight against violence, corruption and impunity, and respect for valid international treaties are all essential elements in the promotion of peace and democracy as basic forms of human coexistence.

15. Peace and democracy are strengthened through popular participation. Accordingly, sustainable development requires the reinforcement of democratic institutions and the mechanisms of participation and the rule of law.

E. Respect for the multiculturalism and ethnic diversity of the region

16. The Central American countries are in many ways societies shaped by ethnic and cultural diversity, and this represents a great treasure that must be preserved by creating conditions allowing all forms of cultural expression to develop freely, especially indigenous cultures - that of the aboriginal inhabitants - which have been relegated to inferior status as a result of the Conquest and colonization. The right to cultural identity is a fundamental human right and the basis of coexistence and national unity.

17. Indigenous peoples are generally to be found in the areas of greatest biological diversity, and in some cases their lifestyles are in harmony with the preservation of the natural environment. The indigenous conception of the world is supportive of that objective because it perceives nature as inseparable from humans.

18. Consequently, respect for ethnic diversity and the development of indigenous cultures, an objective in itself, is also respect for the natural world. However, if respect for the environment is to become a consistent practice, conceptions must be implemented by sustainable development options accessible to people.

19. Respect for ethnic diversity can exist only where there is peace and democracy and easy access to opportunities for sustainable development.

F. Achieving a greater degree of economic integration among the countries of the region with the rest of the world

20. As part of a globalizing trend, the benefits of free trade must be within reach of the entire region; specifically, the more developed countries must advocate and pursue policies enabling the region to create a wide free trade and economic integration zone as soon as possible, to which the Central American countries will have access on appropriate terms and in a manner that will safeguard the specific characteristics of their development stages.

G. Intergenerational responsibility for sustainable development

21. The strategies, policies and programmes of States will promote sustainable development and the well-being of current and future generations by fostering a better life for human beings in the political, economic, social, cultural and environmental domains.

IV. FOUNDATIONS OF THE ALLIANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

22. Sustainable development is an integrated approach to development which calls for simultaneous efforts in the four areas on which this Alliance is based in the interest of balanced progress.

23. Democracy, characterized by popular participation in decisions affecting society, requires that public policies and patterns of production and coexistence should be wide-ranging and participatory. Moreover, the struggle against poverty cannot be won unless there is economic growth, and it can only be achieved by improving the quality of human resources and the economic opportunities open to the disadvantaged through social policy.

24. Democracy and economic and social development are not sustainable without conserving the environment and natural resources, which goes to show once again that the element added by the sustainable development approach is its emphasis on simultaneous efforts to achieve democracy, economic growth with equity, social development, the sustainable management of natural resources and improved environmental quality.

A. Democracy

25. Democracy, as a basic form of human coexistence, and sustainable development are closely linked. Only in a democratic and participatory society governed by the rule of law will Central America achieve well-being and justice.

26. Support for the consolidation of democracy and the protection and full guarantee of human rights is an expression of respect for human dignity, and therefore constitutes one of the pillars of sustainable development.

27. Decentralization and deconcentration of the political, economic and administrative activity of the State are factors making that feasible, as are the strengthening and consolidation of democratic institutions, local administrations and municipal governments, as well as non-governmental and community organizations.

28. The firm and lasting peace that will emerge from this model of human coexistence will make it possible to achieve sustainable development, which requires harmonious relationships among people and between people and the natural environment.

B. Social and cultural development

29. The major challenge facing society is to eradicate extreme poverty in our countries. Poverty is not only proof of a serious state of backwardness, but also a manifestation of inequality, an obstacle to peaceful conciliation and national integration and a potential threat to democratic coexistence and a firm and lasting peace.

30. Social development as a component of sustainable development in Central America is based on the criteria of subsidiarity, solidarity, shared responsibility, self-management and satisfaction of the basic needs of the population, as well as on community empowerment and participation.

31. Communities and community organizations, intermediate institutions and local governments will shoulder the major responsibility. The success of

sustainable development in the region depends on establishing and strengthening the municipal structures in charge of community organization and participation and decentralized social services with broad participation of the beneficiaries.

32. The focus will be on:

(a) Investment in human resources. To that end, priority will be given to fundamental education, preventive health care, environmental sanitation and training and skills-building;

(b) Implementation of programmes in support of families and vulnerable groups in order to foster the integrated development of children, adolescents, the elderly and women;

(c) Improved access of low-income groups to social services and to the social and economic infrastructure;

(d) Increased opportunities for access to employment, the objective being to establish conditions that will generate productive activities by easing credit for small- and medium-sized enterprises, providing technical assistance and improving economic opportunities for the neediest.

33. The development of public awareness of the importance of promoting sustainable development will be a key factor.

34. Respect for all forms of life and for its natural foundation - the land - implies a set of values conducive to the development of a national identity in the context of cultural pluralism and ethnic diversity. Furthermore, sustainable development generates attitudes, habits and lifestyles that strengthen solidarity and with it, identity. Due attention will be devoted to making the most of the cultural and historical heritage of the region and its natural endowments in the interest of promoting sustainable economic and social activities, and creativity will be encouraged in the arts, science and technology.

C. Sustainable economic development

35. The sustainable economic development of Central America is based on liberty, dignity, justice, social equity and economic efficiency.

36. The rational and efficient administration of macroeconomic and sectoral policies, as well as the application of clear, relevant and consistent rules, are indispensable prerequisites for achieving and maintaining economic and social stability. Our future socio-economic order combines all that is essential for the peaceful coexistence of the elements of society and for creating a people-oriented economy with a built-in cost/benefit factor and factors relating to the deterioration of the environment and the rational utilization of natural resources.

37. The improvement of the economic infrastructure, especially in the areas of electric power, telecommunications and transportation, is another essential

component, not only for increasing the productivity of the region's economies, but also for stimulating economic activity generally.

38. The vulnerability of the region's economies, which are dependent on the export of a limited number of primary commodities, is reflected in the persistence of a substantial trade deficit. Consequently, our products must have greater access to the industrialized nations.

39. The burden of the debt and debt-servicing has seriously limited our countries' ability to accelerate growth and eradicate poverty; a lasting solution to the external debt problem must be found as soon as possible if we are to energize development.

40. The financial strategies necessary to ensure the availability of resources for sustainable development from internal as well as external sources will be worked out. Along these lines, consideration could be given - consistent with the circumstances of each country - to the forgiveness, conversion and rescheduling of bilateral and multilateral debts, and the establishment of revolving funds and trust funds, as well as to the restructuring and reallocation of national budgetary resources, giving priority to sustainable development goals and bringing security and defence spending into line with the realities of each country and the climate of peace that is making headway in the region.

41. The regional model of sustainable development is encouraging the growing participation of the private sector and the full development of its creative capacity. It is aimed at promoting direct investment by, inter alia, providing services to the neediest groups as a means of augmenting productivity and competitiveness, as well as mitigating poverty.

42. Furthermore, initiatives will be taken for the rational utilization of renewable energy sources, promoting trade and sustainable productive investment, stimulating savings, de-bureaucratizing public administration, supporting research and development of clean technologies by setting up research centres for the development of technical environmental standards at the Central American level and certifying the environmental quality of our export products. All those initiatives will contribute to the industrial conversion process under way in the region and will use sustainable production methods that incorporate preventive measures and not reactive measures like periodic environmental impact evaluations.

43. At the same time, human resources development is a basic prerequisite for increasing productivity and an important vehicle for greater social equity. To that end, special emphasis must be placed on investment in education and health, especially for the neediest groups, as a means of increasing productivity, improving competitiveness and reducing poverty in the region.

44. A dynamic balance must be established between the preservation and protection of the environment and the development of tourism in the region, with due respect for the natural and cultural heritage of our peoples.

45. The strengthening and consolidation of Central American commitments to integration are basic to improving the quality of life of the population, increasing interregional trade, opening new markets, and bringing Central America into the world economy.

46. When it joins that economy, all countries will have to abide by the commitments that they have undertaken to restrain protectionism and provide even greater access to markets, especially in sectors of interest to developing countries. Improving market access for commodities is therefore urgent, particularly by gradually eliminating barriers to the importation of primary commodities and manufactured goods from the Central American countries, and by a substantial, phased reduction of such supports as production and export subsidies that encourage the production of non-competitive goods.

D. Sustainable management of natural resources and improvement of environmental quality

47. The depletion and deterioration of the renewable base of natural resources is a problem for future development in Central America. The pollution of water, air and soil has spread rapidly in the region and will probably continue unless current development and industrialization processes are redirected. The principal threat lies in the loss of forests and in the reduction and deterioration of the water flow and its quality, which is also one of the major causes of illness and death, above all in marginalized populations.

48. The sustainable management of natural resources and the improvement of environmental quality are mechanisms for protecting the ecological processes and the genetic diversity essential for the maintenance of life. Moreover, they contribute to the ongoing effort to preserve biological diversity and protected areas, control and prevent water, air and soil pollution, and allow for the sustained utilization of ecosystems and the rehabilitation of those that have deteriorated.

49. In order to ensure that the conservation of the human environment will be a means of making sustainable development feasible and giving it momentum, the countries of the region have committed themselves to designing policies compatible with internal and external legislation in the areas of land management, energy, transportation, human settlements and population, forests and biological diversity, and control and prevention of air, water and soil pollution, among others.

50. In view of the serious situation facing the countries of Central America, it is imperative to formulate a policy and master plan for energy generation, marketing and consumption that encourages the use of renewable and alternative energy sources, energy-efficient programmes, and a common electric power network in Central America.

V. GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF THE ALLIANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

51. The general objectives of the Alliance are:

(a) To turn the isthmus into a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development by promoting changes in individual and social attitudes conducive to the building of a model of sustainable development in the political, economic, social, cultural and environmental spheres within the framework of Agenda 21;

(b) Sustainable integrated land management to ensure that the region's biodiversity is preserved for our benefit and for that of humankind;

(c) To make the international community aware of the scope of the alliance and of the importance of and mutual benefit to be derived from support for this sustainable Central American model;

(d) To promote conditions that permanently enhance society's capacity for and participation in improving the present and future quality of life;

(e) These objectives are set out in an annex that forms an integral and inseparable part of the Alliance for Sustainable Development.

VI. INSTRUMENTS OF THE ALLIANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A. National Council for Sustainable Development

52. The Governments have agreed to set up national councils for sustainable development representing the public sector and civil society.

53. The areas of activity and responsibility of the national councils for sustainable development in the individual countries shall be such as to maintain the cohesion of national policies, programmes and projects and their consistency with the sustainable development strategy.

B. Central American Council for Sustainable Development

54. There is established a Central American Council for Sustainable Development, which shall be composed of the Presidents of Central America and the Prime Minister of Belize, who may delegate their representation.

55. The Council shall adopt and implement its decisions, commitments and other agreements relating to sustainable development through the Central American organizations and institutions. The Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs, together with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belize, shall be the body responsible for coordinating presidential decisions. It shall be assisted by the General Secretariat of the Central American Integration System (SICA) operating in close conjunction with the technical secretariats of the regional subsystems and entities.

56. The Central American Council for Sustainable Development shall introduce mechanisms to ensure the participation of civil society in the entire process of sustainable development, in particular the Consultative Committee referred to in the Tegucigalpa Protocol.

We adopt this Alliance for Sustainable Development in the city of Managua, Republic of Nicaragua, on 12 October 1994.

José María FIGUERES OLSEN
President
Republic of Costa Rica

Armanda CALDERÓN SOL
President
Republic of El Salvador

Ramiro de LEÓN CARPIO
President
Republic of Guatemala

Carlos Roberto REINA IDIAQUEZ
President
Republic of Honduras

Violeta BARRIOS DE CHAMORRO
President
Republic of Nicaragua

Ernesto PEREZ BALLADARES
President
Republic of Panama

Henry YOUNG
Representative of the Prime Minister
of Belize

Appendix

Specific aims of the Alliance for Sustainable Development

A. Political aims

1. To support the peace and reconciliation processes in the countries of the region.

2. To promote full enjoyment of human rights.

3. To strengthen the rule of law and democratic institutions.

4. To counter corruption and impunity.

5. To enhance municipal administrative and managerial capacity to deal directly with the problems of individual localities.

6. To streamline the machinery for political and electoral participation.

7. To support various forms of community organization that preserve national identity in a context of cultural pluralism and ethnic diversity.

8. To tackle the causes of violence and crime, including drug trafficking.

9. To modernize public institutions in the interest of greater efficiency.

B. Economic aims

1. To promote a strategy of sustainable development and of internal and outward-oriented integration, based on expansion of the internal market and promotion of domestic and foreign investment.

2. To promote policies aimed at scaling down intraregional imbalances that affect sustainable development in the region.

3. To boost economic growth rates in order to eliminate poverty and thereby ensure the social and political sustainability of the processes of economic liberalization and democratization in the countries of the region.

4. To seek joint solutions to the problem of the external debt.

5. To coordinate macroeconomic and sectoral policies on a regional basis.

6. To stimulate investment and sustainable production processes.

7. To promote a wide-ranging study and discussion on the economic and institutional reforms that need to be instituted by the countries of Central America in preparation for the joint negotiation of a free trade and investment treaty with the countries of the hemisphere.

8. To promote the generation and transfer of clean technologies in order to raise productivity, develop environmentally friendly technical standards and stimulate environmentally sound production.

9. To promote and develop ecologically sustainable tourism.

10. To formulate policies designed to rationalize and stimulate agricultural activities that help to foster rural development, boost intraregional trade in agricultural produce, guarantee food security and increase and diversify exports, forging stronger links between the chains of production, trade and services.

11. To encourage the incorporation of science and technology in the productive process through improved human resources technological training, the strengthening and establishment of technological innovation centres, and the development of "enterprise incubators" and technological packages.

12. To promote the reconstruction, rehabilitation and modernization of the regional infrastructure, especially transportation, telecommunication and energy equipment, with a view to enhancing the efficiency and competitiveness of the productive sectors at the national, regional and international levels.

C. Social aims

1. To eliminate de facto or de jure discrimination against women in order to improve their social standing and quality of life.

2. To reduce extreme poverty, especially through job creation.

3. To ensure appropriate reintegration of refugee, displaced and uprooted population groups in a safe and stable Central American environment so that they can enjoy all civil rights and improve their quality of life with equal opportunities.

4. To incorporate the criteria of subsidiarity, community solidarity, shared responsibility and self-management in policies designed to alleviate poverty through development, community participation and economic and administrative decentralization and deconcentration of State structures.

5. To accord priority to investment in the individual with the aim of achieving well-rounded human development.

D. Cultural aims

1. To stimulate a life ethic that promotes and strengthens sustainable development.

2. To reinforce the development of national identity in a context of cultural and ethnic diversity.

3. To promote, protect and make appropriate use of the cultural and natural heritage.

4. To encourage forms of cultural expression that are environmentally friendly.

5. To promote education for the care and sustainable use of natural resources.

6. To promote the restitution and return of illicitly exported cultural property.

E. Environmental aims

1. To coordinate and update environmental parameters, legislation and the competent domestic institutions.

2. To reduce levels of air, water and soil pollution that adversely affect the quality of life.

3. To protect, understand and use the region's biodiversity, promoting, inter alia, the development of biological corridors and protected areas, biodiversity centres and biological gardens.

4. To enhance the capacity for the regulation, monitoring and implementation of environmental standards and the classification of environmental offences.

5. To promote awareness and participation of society in environmental protection through the incorporation of environmental considerations in formal and informal education systems.

6. To bring about a steady decline in the rate of deforestation and concurrently promote reafforestation and productive forestry activity at the regional level.

7. To ensure proper management of water catchment areas in order to guarantee the availability of water resources for various uses in terms of quality and quantity.

8. To promote the regional discussion of common policies on new environmentally friendly products, green labels and environmental impact studies.

9. To promote sustainable development projects in frontier zones.

Annex II

Alliance for Sustainable Development

Commitments on the environment and natural resources

1. Our countries have signed national, regional and international instruments dealing with the environment and natural resources which are at different stages of implementation; nevertheless, unsatisfactory levels of water, air and soil pollution still persist, accompanied by the accelerated loss of our biological diversity and in particular of our natural forests. These facts underline the need to strengthen the environmental component in public and private economic decision-making and the participation of civil society in environmental management and conservation.

2. The Central American Presidents are aware of this situation and, in order to give effect to the principles of the Alliance for Sustainable Development which we endorsed on 12 October 1994, have decided to make the following commitments:

A. Legislation

3. To recommend to the Executive Secretariat of the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD) that, in consultation with the appropriate authorities in each country, it should produce a report on the status and implementation of the regional and international agreements on the environment and natural resources signed by the Central American Governments for submission to our next regular summit meeting.

B. Natural resources and biodiversity

4. To set a time-limit of three months for the appropriate national authorities to map out the Central American Biological Corridor and expand their national protected forests systems as part of a plan for policy coordination and decentralization, and to establish biodiversity centres and botanical gardens in each country in order to encourage research into conservation and the uses of biodiversity.

5. To have the competent national authorities, draw up a Central American list of plant and animal species in danger of extinction, with a view to banning their collection, transport and marketing. This list should be completed within three months at the latest.

C. Land development

6. To instruct the competent authorities to initiate the necessary action for the preparation of land development plans, setting a time-limit of two months within which they shall hold a regional meeting with the fundamental objective of establishing common methods and procedures for fulfilling this commitment.

D. Environmental impact studies

7. In accordance with the commitment on environmental impact studies which we assumed at our Guácimo Summit, to instruct the CCAD Executive Secretariat in conjunction with representatives of civil society, to prepare within six months a proposal outlining principles, minimum content, methods, arrangements for advisory services, mechanisms for consultation of civil society and other matters which should be included in such studies.

E. Forestry resources

8. To adopt forestry management plans as an integrated development instrumentality for the sustainable management of forests.

9. To instruct the competent authorities, in conjunction with the sectors of civil society concerned, to develop draft technical standards for the certification of forestry products from forests managed for sustainability, for which we have set a time-limit of six months.

10. To formulate and carry out a plan for preventing and fighting forest fires.

11. To promote the participation of municipal authorities in the management of forestry resources.

F. Water

12. To give priority to the formulation of policies and legislation on the management and conservation of water resources, including inter alia legal and institutional regulation and arrangements for coordination among the various authorities responsible for the management and administration of this resource both for human consumption and for irrigation and power generation; and to instruct the competent authorities to carry out this commitment.

13. To instruct the appropriate authorities to update the studies on Central American watersheds with a view to the design of practical projects for approval and management by these authorities.

G. Air

14. To totally eliminate lead from gasoline used in Central America by 31 July 1995 at the latest.

15. To set a time-limit of one year for the issue of regulations for the control of air pollution by vehicles and for the establishment of systems to monitor air quality, with the participation of the public and private sector. For this purpose we have instructed the appropriate institutions to conduct awareness programmes and education campaigns for the general public, in order to achieve greater popular participation in the fulfilment of this commitment.

H. Soil

16. To instruct our competent authorities to standardize soil classification in the countries of the region and identify the areas where the soils are most fragile, so that within two years action strategies for the protection and recovery of the most degraded areas can be produced.

I. Energy

17. To instruct the national authorities within six months, in collaboration with the bodies responsible for energy regulation, production, distribution and marketing, to devise a Central American energy policy and master plan (oil, electricity and renewable resources subsector). This policy and master plan should give priority to the use of renewable energy sources and the promotion of greater participation by the private sector and local authorities in power-generation systems, and to energy-saving programmes.

J. Pollution control

18. To set a time-limit of two years from now for all our countries to bring into force specific regulations for the monitoring and control of pollution of:

(a) Water;

(b) Air;

(c) Soil;

(d) The auditory environment;

(e) The visual environment; and

(f) Other environments.

Fulfilment of this commitment will be the responsibility of CCAD, and the action will be taken gradually by establishing decentralized supervision and monitoring machinery and encouraging the participation of the civil society.

K. Education

19. To instruct our ministers of education to elaborate and carry out, in conjunction with the environment and natural resources authorities, programmes that incorporate an environmental education component in curricula and courses, from the pre-primary to the specialized levels, with emphasis on knowledge of the natural resources of the region.

20. To establish through our ministries of education regional arrangements for coordination and exchange of experience in matters of the environment and natural resources.

21. To promote in each of our countries environmental education programmes, within and outside the education system, which should include the training of security units and personnel responsible for the application of environmental laws.

L. Finances

22. To instruct the Central American Bank for Economic Integration to begin to implement the regional environment subprogramme and ensure that its resources are channelled through the relevant existing national funds.

23. To create a Central American Environment Fund.

M. Information

24. To establish a Central American environment information system operating through CCAD, which will improve and expand the effective access of civil society to electronic communication services and other means of communication.